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251411Z May 06

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 000714

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STATE FOR AF/W  
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/23/2016

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SUBJECT: SENATOR DANJUMA TALKS ABOUT OBASANJO THIRD TERM

Classified By: Consul General Brian L. Browne for Reason 1.4 (D).

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SUMMARY  
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1. (C) During a May 22 conversation, Edo State Senator Daisy Danjuma gave a Senate insider's view of President Obasanjo's failed last-ditch efforts to garner her support for his third term bid. Obasanjo personally pleaded with her and her husband, Obasanjo's former Defense Minister, for support. Both declined. Regarding deliberations in the Senate, she painted a picture of frenzied Obasanjo supporters' attempts to alternatively cajole and intimidate third term opponents. The third term amendment has splintered the party. Unless Obasanjo is genuine about reconciliation, the party will be weakened as many anti-Obasanjo elements are more willing to defect. End summary.

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DANJUMAS REBUFF THE PRESIDENT'S ADVANCES  
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2. (C) Edo State Senator Daisy Danjuma recounted an early May telephone call from President Obasanjo regarding the third term amendment. According to Danjuma, Obasanjo first solicited her support for the measure. She responded that her husband had already voiced to Obasanjo his opposition. There was no way she could publicly oppose her strong-willed husband. "He would throw me out of the house," she told Obasanjo. Then, Obasanjo pleaded with her not to speak against the measure on the Senate floor. She refused this request as well, stating that her constituents expected to hear from her. Then, Obasanjo told her he did not want a third term but did not want to hand the party to his Vice President. If your husband wanted the job, I would be satisfied to retire to my chicken farm, Obasanjo purportedly said. She responded that Obasanjo knew darn well that General Danjuma had no interest in being President and that the President also had no interest in Danjuma succeeding him. Last, Obasanjo tried to convince her not to persuade other Senators to join the anti-third term camp. She stated that she refused that entreaty as well. In the end, Obasanjo muttered something about her being "troublesome," then ended the phone call.

3. (C) General Danjuma, a longtime ally who practically forced Obasanjo to assume command in 1976 and who backed him in 1996, probably enjoys more respect inside the Nigerian military than any other retired general, including his former subordinates, Obasanjo and Babangida. The President must listen to him and he is one of the few people who can talk frankly to the President without fear, Senator Danjuma asserted. As early as last year her husband had warned Obasanjo to drop the third term shenanigans and begin to identify a suitable successor. During a more recent conversation, General Danjuma firmly reiterated his opposition, stating he would fight to assure Obasanjo was defeated. Because of her husband's clear opposition, the presidency started threatening to confiscate his lucrative oil block, she asserted.

4. (C) In the lead-up to the decisive vote, she claimed the Senate was a buzz of activity. Money changed hands. Senator Jubril Aminu from Adamawa State, VP Atiku's home state, tried to change her mind. Aminu told her Obasanjo had promised him the Vice Presidency in 2007. Senator Danjuma recounted telling Aminu that he was the fourth Senator who had come to her claiming Obasanjo had promised them Atiku's seat.

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OBASANJO'S ALLIES SHRINK AWAY, PDP IN DISARRAY  
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5. (C) The third-term campaign had caused a rupture in Obasanjo's camp. Many Obasanjo insiders did not believe in it and only went through the motions of supporting it. Tony Anenih of Edo State, Chairman of the PDP Board of Trustees

and another longtime Obasanjo man, told the Senator he had no choice but to publicly support the President. However, he opposed the third term gambit and did not try to muscle and intimidate people with his usual alacrity.

16. (C) Mrs. Danjuma said the PDP has also been split and weakened. People have lost the fear they had of Obasanjo, and now you will start to see their true allegiances, not the ones they feigned. If Obasanjo seeks vengeance for his defeat, he will chase people out of the party in droves, she predicted. Unless he allows the party nomination to go to a northern candidate, the PDP will break apart, the Senator further presaged.

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COMMENT  
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17. (C) While some Senators have tried to paint this as a victory for democracy and begin to extol the virtues of the National Assembly, Senator Danjuma was candid in portraying this as a play between competing power blocs. Now, the President is reeling from his misadventure, and his room for maneuvering is severely abbreviated. If Danjuma is right, Obasanjo could be on the verge of unintentionally presiding over the demise of the party he once boasted was the largest in Africa. With her stature rising because of her public opposition to Obasanjo, Danjuma will probably have more influence than before in the South-South caucus. Moreover, her position that Obasanjo now cannot unilaterally anoint a successor is probably representative of South-South thought. However, her belief that the Presidency should rotate to the North is not representative of South-South thought. It likely has more to do with the influence of her husband who is from the Middle Belt section of the North. End comment.  
BROWNE